

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for maintaining an association between a receiver unit and a plurality of geographic areas served by the receiver unit, comprising:
 - at installation of the receiver unit, determining the geographic areas served by the receiver unit;
 - creating a database that associates the geographic areas served by the receiver unit with a unique ID that identifies the receiver unit; and
 - subsequent to installation, updating the database by:
 - providing the unique ID that identifies the receiver unit to a plurality of end viewers served by the receiver unit;
 - requesting that at least one of the end viewers associate the unique ID with the geographic area associated with the end viewer;
 - receiving the association between the unique ID and the geographic area associated with the end viewer from the end viewer; and
 - updating the database.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the geographic areas are identified by zip codes.
3. The method of Claim 1, wherein providing the unique ID to the end viewers, comprises: displaying the unique ID to the end viewers.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein requesting that at least one of the end viewers associate the unique ID with the geographic area associated with the end viewer, comprises:
 - requesting that the at least one end viewer associate the unique ID with the geographic area associated with the end viewer by providing information via a communications means selected from the group consisting of:
 - a web site, telephone, mail and e-mail.

5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
 - using the database, displaying a map that identifies the geographic areas associated with each receiver unit.
6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
 - using the geographic areas associated with the unique ID in the database to identify demographic information associated with the geographic areas served by the receiver unit; and
 - associating the demographic information with the unique ID for the receiver unit in the database.
7. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
 - verifying the database by comparing the stored association between the unique ID and the geographic area associated with the end viewer with an association between the receiver unit and an assigned geographic area; and
 - if the association between the unique ID and the geographic area associated with the end viewer is inconsistent with the association between the receiver unit and an assigned geographic area, then updating the database by storing the association between the unique ID and the assigned geographic area in the database.
8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the association between the receiver unit and the assigned geographic area is obtained from an external database.
9. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
 - using the association in the database to provide targeted programming based on the geographic areas served by the receiver units.

10. A system for maintaining an association between a plurality of receiver units and a plurality of geographic area served by the receiver units, comprising:

a central system for distributing national content to a plurality of receiver units and for instructing the receiver units to generate local content;

the plurality of receiver units, each receiver unit serving at least one geographic area and each receiver unit associated with a unique ID; and

a central database for maintaining an association between the unique IDs for the receiver units and the geographic areas served by each of the receiver units, wherein the central database is updated by:

the central system instructing the receiver units to generate local content that includes displaying the unique ID associated with the receiver unit;

each receiver unit displaying its unique ID to at least one end viewer and requesting that the at least one end viewer associate the unique ID with the geographic area associated with the end viewer; and

updating the database with the association between the unique ID and the geographic area associated with the end viewer.

11. The system of Claim 10, wherein each receiver unit maintains an association between the receiver unit and the geographic areas it serves.

12. The system of Claim 11, wherein the database updates the association maintained at the receiver units.

13. The system of Claim 10, further comprising:

a display device that uses a graphical interface to display the association between the receiver units and the geographic areas served.

14. The system of Claim 10, wherein each receiver unit delivers targeted programming to the end viewers it serves based on the geographic areas served by the receiver unit.

15. A method for maintaining an association between a distribution device and a plurality of end user characteristics associated with a plurality of end users served by the distribution device, comprising:

at installation of the distribution device, determining the end user characteristics associated with the end users served by the distribution device;

creating a database that associates the end user characteristics with a unique ID that identifies the distribution device; and

subsequent to installation, updating the database by:

providing the unique ID that identifies the distribution device to a plurality of end users served by the distribution device;

requesting that at least one of the end users associate the unique ID with the end user characteristic associated with the end viewer;

receiving the association between the unique ID and the end viewer characteristic associated with the end viewer from the end viewer; and

updating the database.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein updating the database further comprises:

requesting that a technician determine the association between the distribution device and the end viewer characteristics for the end viewers served by the distribution device;

receiving the association distribution device and the end viewer characteristics for the end viewers served by the distribution device from the technician; and

updating the database.

17. The method of Claim 15, wherein the end user characteristic corresponds to end user location.

18. The method of Claim 15, further comprising:

using the association in the database to provide targeted programming based on the end user characteristics of the end users served by the receiver units.

19. The method of Claim 15, wherein updating the database further comprises:
in response to receiving the association between the unique ID and the end viewer
characteristic associated with the end viewer from the end viewer, determining that the end
viewer is eligible for a prize.